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ACTION EUR-00

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	PDI-00	DS-00
	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VCI-00	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	LAB-01
	M-00	VCIE-00	NSAE-00	PA-00	PM-00	GIWI-00	SCT-00
	SP-00	SSO-00	SS-00	SA-00	ASDS-00	FMP-00	R-00
	ECA-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00
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R 071522Z DEC 05
 FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9296

UNCLAS BRATISLAVA 000969

FOR EUR/PPD CFITZGERALD, JLOCKARD AND EPAPAZIAN;
 EUR/NCE VLYNN;
 EUR/FO CGRAFFY

E.O. 12958: N/A
 TAGS: KPAO, PREL, PHUM, PTER, LO
 SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO SECRETARY RICE ON DETAINEE ISSUES

REF: STATE 219905

1. In response to reftel, post sent the full text of Secretary Rice's statement to more than 100 key contacts in government, academia and the media, put it on the web page and called journalists to offer any additional information they might need. PM Dzurinda's foreign policy advisor told us the material was very helpful in understanding our position and in formulating GOS views on the issue. The advisor agreed with the approach taken in the 12/5 statement.

2. In general, Slovak coverage of this issue, though not always positive, has been without vitriol or gratuitous anti-Americanism. Secretary Rice's pre-departure statement on detainee issues was covered by the major Slovak newspapers basically according to the general lines of their normal editorial stances towards the United States. The newspaper SME reported Dec. 6 on the statement in an objective and factual manner, under the headline "Rice warns Europe: We are in this together; U.S. Secretary of State comes to visit Europe, will explain news about secret CIA prisons." On Dec. 7, SME carried a positive article about the meeting with Angela Merkel, under the headline, "Rice admitted that they made mistakes." The business daily,

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Hospodarske Noviny, reported objectively on the statement Dec. 6, but the headline was, "Unconvincing reasoning." The following day, the paper reported that Secretary Rice had told Merkel that the US does not torture prisoners because it is against US legislation and international law.

3. The daily Pravda, however, which tends to be more skeptical of US policies, said that the Secretary was going on the offensive on the secret prison issue, but did not report on the arguments she made in the statement. The headline Dec. 6 was "Rice will not explain to Europe," referring to the alleged secret activities. A commentary the following day under the headline "Bond has changed into Rambo" notes that the Secretary says the US is not breaching the law, but comments that the intelligence services have decided that the best way to gain information is to force captives to speak. A critical cartoon shows the Secretary saying, "Let's talk about things we have in common - for example, Christmas, hamburgers, . . ."

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